

# How to establish records retention schedules

South Carolina Department  
of Archives and History  
Archives and Records  
Management Division

**The schedule** A records retention schedule helps you manage your records systematically by specifying how long, where and in what format your records will be kept, and what their final disposition will be. The timeframe the schedule establishes can range anywhere from one year to permanent.

**What a schedule includes** The schedule lists the titles of records, describes their contents, gives their retention periods (the length of time the records must be maintained in the office and, in some cases, the length of time they can be kept in inactive storage in a records center), and gives their final dispositions.

**Types of schedules** There are general schedules and specific schedules. **General schedules** are designed for records that are common to many government offices; **specific schedules** are designed for records that are unique to one government office. This leaflet will discuss the development of specific records retention schedules only (see pages 6 and 7 for samples of specific retention schedules for both a state agency and a local government).

**The legal justification** The South Carolina "Public Records Act" (*Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976*, Section 30-1-10 through 30-1-140, as

amended) requires the South Carolina Department of Archives and History to help both state and local governments establish and administer a records management program. Section 30-1-90 refers to the development of records retention schedules.

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**Section 30-1-90**

*Archives shall assist in creating, filing and preserving records, inventories, and schedules.*

*(A). . . When requested by the Archives, agencies and subdivisions must assist the Archives in preparing an inclusive inventory of records in their custody and establishing records schedules mandating a time period for the retention of each series of records . . .*

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**The benefits  
of using  
schedules**

When governmental bodies use retention schedules to control their records, they increase their efficiency and reduce the possibility of incurring legal action for disposing of records improperly. By using retention schedules, they are able to:

1. Identify and preserve records of permanent historical value.
2. Legally destroy records that have outlived their legal, fiscal, and/or administrative values.
3. Use space effectively and save on the cost of new equipment or construction by systematically removing outdated records from file cabinets and office and storage space.
4. Increase efficiency by no longer having to handle obsolete materials.

**How can my office  
establish  
schedules?**

Check with your records officer to see if there are specific or general schedules already approved for your records. If you do not have a records officer, contact either our State Records Analysis Unit or our Local Records Analysis Unit for help.

***The inventory***

If your records are not covered by retention schedules, you will need to get the information you need to develop them by getting inventory forms and taking an inventory—see our Public records information leaflet no. 17, *How to conduct a*

*records inventory* . We have inventory forms, and our staffers can help you with on-site training.

***Analysis and appraisal***

Once the inventory is complete, you will use the information you have compiled on each record to establish its value and develop its retention period. You will analyze the information to decide, among other things, how long you will need the record for office use; whether or not the information is summarized elsewhere; and what laws or regulations might require you to hold the record for a specified period. You will also appraise the record to establish its administrative, fiscal, legal, or historical value. And since a record often has more than one value, these values are not mutually exclusive.

**Administrative value:** a record has administrative value if the information it holds is useful to the conduct of daily business.

**Fiscal value:** A record has fiscal value if the information it holds is needed to document the expenditure of public funds or to fulfill financial obligations.

**Legal value:** a record has legal value if the information it holds gives evidence of the legal rights or obligations of the government and its citizens or ensures compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

**Historical value:** a record has historical value if the information it holds documents the history of the government and the community.

When you have completed each appraisal, you will suggest a minimum retention period by completing part 19 on the Record Series Inventory Form. You will then return your completed inventory forms to us, and one of our records analysts will help you finalize your retention schedules.

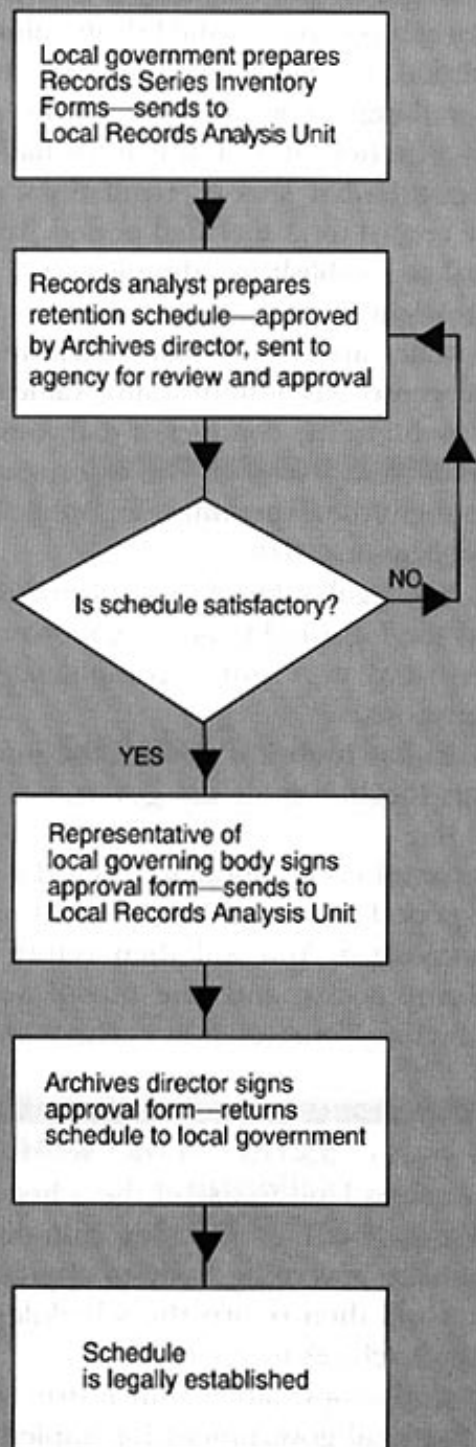
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**Final approval**

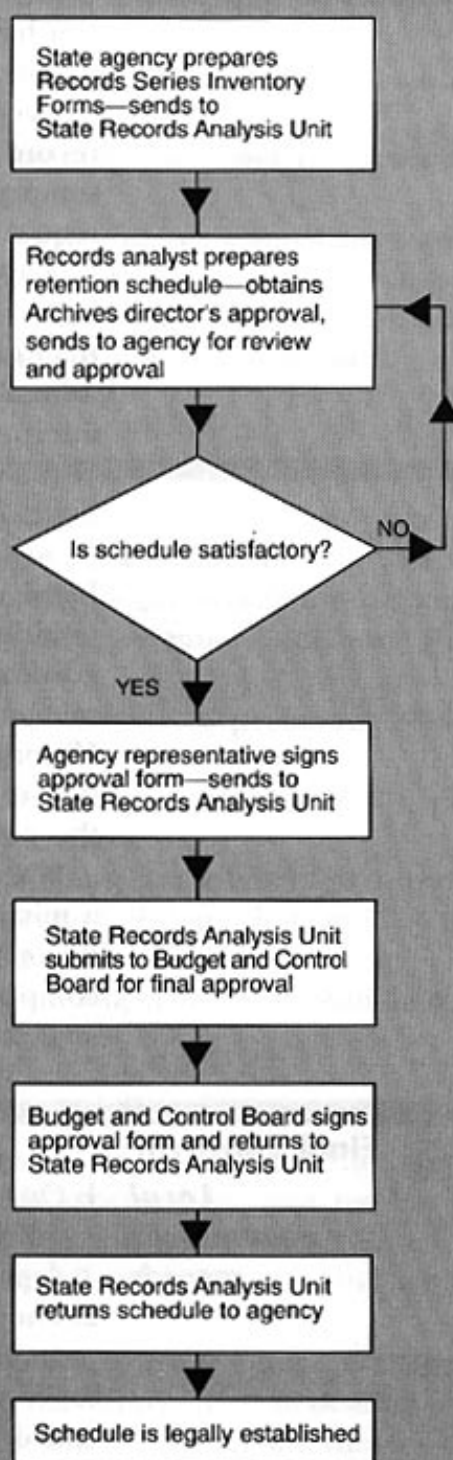
***Local  
government  
records***

1. Our Local Records Analysis Unit will send the schedule to the local government for both the records custodian or department head and the governing body to approve.
2. The local government will then return the schedule to us for the director of the Archives to approve.
3. We will send an approved copy, along with instructions and forms, back to the local government for implementation.

### Local government records scheduling process



### State agency records scheduling process



***State agency records***

1. The Archives director will approve the schedule and our State Records Analysis Unit will send it on to the state agency for its director to approve.
2. The agency will then return the schedule to us, and we will send it to the Budget and Control Board for final approval.
3. When it receives the final approval, the Archives will send an approved copy, along with forms and instructions, back to the agency for implementation.

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**For more  
information**

***State agencies,  
colleges, universities,  
and technical colleges***

Contact the State Records Analysis Unit, Division of Archives and Records Management, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1919 Blanding Street, Columbia, S.C. 29201. Telephone: (803) 734-7914; Fax: 734-3387.

***Counties, municipalities,  
school districts, and  
special purpose districts***

Contact the Local Records Analysis Unit, Division of Archives and Records Management, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1919 Blanding Street, Columbia, S.C. 29201. Telephone: (803) 734-7914; Fax: 734-3387. ■



South Carolina Department of Archives and History  
Division of Archives and Records Management

**RECORDS  
RETENTION  
SCHEDULE**

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

RECORD GROUP No. 700

DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

90001 PROJECT FILES

Description

Document administration of projects designed to improve the agency's special programs. Information includes project proposals, correspondence, project activity reports, related memoranda, project summaries and expenditure reports.

Retention

3 years after submission of final expenditure report, destroy.

90002 GRANT FILES (ACTIVE AND INACTIVE)

Description

Document grants received by the division to help fund some of its operations. Information includes financial assistance applications, correspondence related to the grant process, grant award letters, copies of agency budget and accounting reports, related contracts, reimbursement requests and guidelines for administering grant activities.

Retention

3 years after becoming inactive, destroy.

90003 MEETING MINUTES AND ATTACHMENTS

Description

Records of official proceedings of the agency's executive management staff. Information includes agenda, date, place, list of attendees, and a summary of discussion and decisions. Official minutes also include all informational attachments such as reports, surveys, proposals, studies and charts distributed to executives for discussion and for use in making internal policy, planning and management decisions.

Retention

Agency: 5 years after fiscal year.  
State Archives: PERMANENT

The approval and implementation of this records retention schedule should comply with the Department of Archives and History's Guidelines for Understanding and Implementing Records Retention Schedules.



South Carolina Department of Archives and History  
Division of Archives and Records Management

**RECORDS  
RETENTION  
SCHEDULE**

CAROLINA COUNTY

RECORD GROUP NUMBER: 47

FINANCE OFFICE

00123 AUDIT REPORTS

Description

Printed reports documenting the annual audit of county funds. These reports, prepared by an outside accounting firm, are categorized by the various county offices and further classified by accounts to which they relate. This series also includes semiannual and special audits. Information includes balance sheet, summary of revenue and expenditures, cash balances, statement of taxes, statement of delinquent taxes, statement of other receipts, statement of fines and fees.

Retention

Permanent. Microfilm optional.

00124 BANKING RECORDS

Description

Cancelled checks and deposit slips written by the county along with the statements issued by the bank. Information includes (1) checks: date, to whom paid, amount, check number, signature of finance officer; (2) bank statements: list of checks for one month period, dates, beginning balance, ending balance; and (3) deposit slips: date, amounts of deposits, and total deposits.

Retention

3 years, then destroy.

00125 RECEIPTS (RECEIPT CARBONS)

Description

Copies of receipts issued by the office to persons turning over funds. Information includes date, receipt number, from whom received, amount, purpose, and authorized signature.

Retention

3 years, then destroy.

The approval and implementation of this records retention schedule should comply with the Department of Archives and History's Guidelines for Understanding and Implementing Records Retention Schedules.

**Public records  
information  
leaflets from  
the Archives**

- no. 1 *Legal requirements for microfilming public records*
- no. 2 *On choosing records for microfilming*
- no. 3 *Service bureau or in-house microfilming*
- no. 4 *Targeting and certification of microfilm*
- no. 5 *Choosing a microfilm camera*
- no. 6 *Quality testing of microfilm*
- no. 7 *Microfilm and microforms*
- no. 8 *Choosing a micrographics service bureau*
- no. 9 *Choosing microfilm readers and reader/printers*
- no. 10 *Computer assisted retrieval systems*
- no. 11 *Microfilm storage*
- no. 12 *Preservation microfilming*
- no. 13 *Optical Disk: policy statement and recommended practices*
- no. 14 *Storing records in the State Records Center*
- no. 15 *The deposit of security microfilm*
- no. 16 *Disaster preparedness and recovery in state and  
local government records offices*
- no. 17 *How to conduct a records inventory*
- no. 18 *How to establish records retention schedules*
- no. 19 *Photographic media*
- no. 20 *Editing and splicing roll microfilm of long-term or archival  
value*